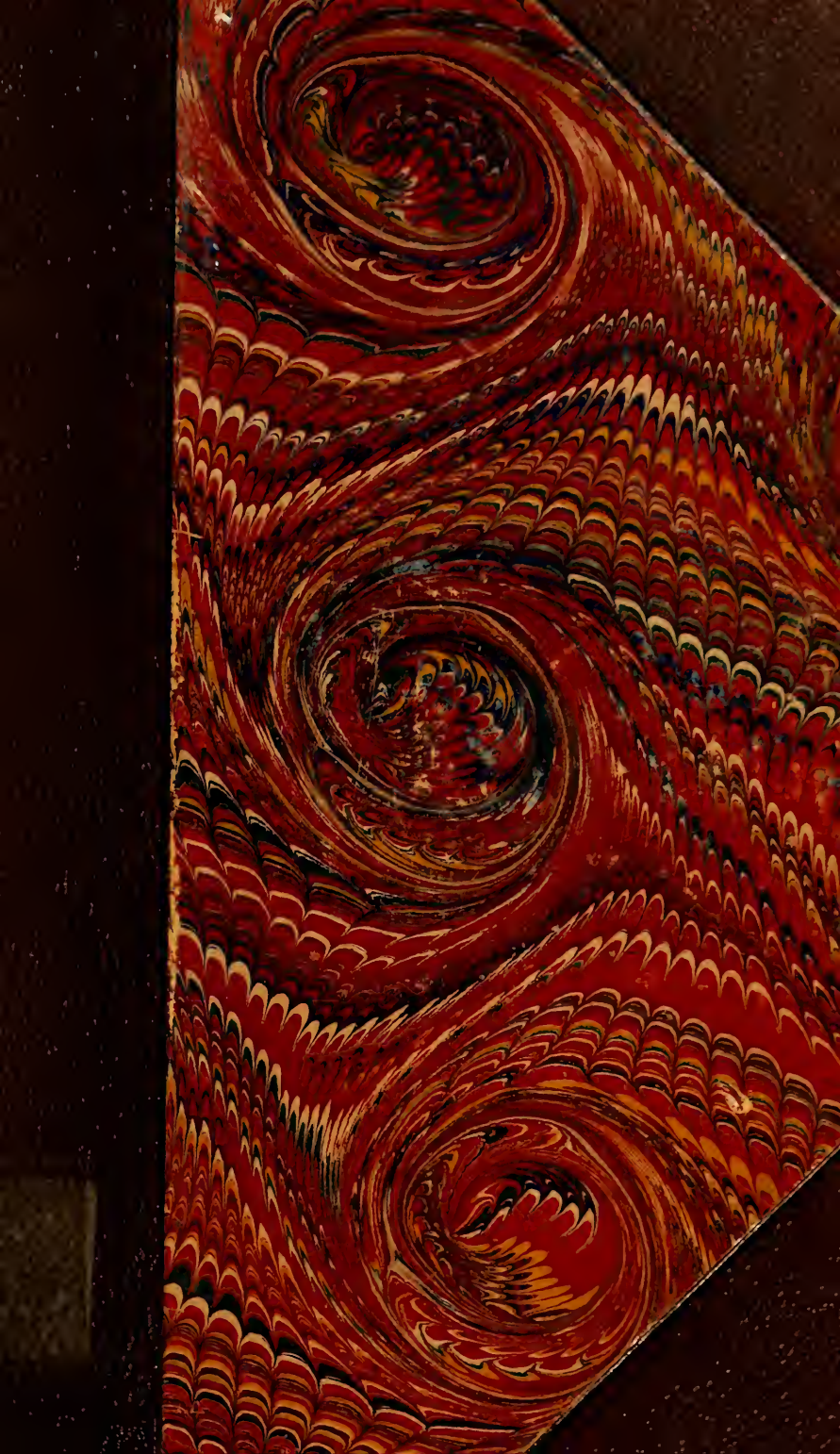




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OCCASIONAL PAPER.

No. 4.

OCTOBER 20TH, 1898.

All communications for the next number must be sent on or before December 17th to Mr. Henry J. Wilson, Hon. Editor, 53, Victoria Street, Westminster, London, S.W.

The Editor does not of necessity identify himself with opinions which may be expressed in the signed articles or in letters of correspondents, and the right is reserved of not printing any letter which may seem not to come within the limits of a discussion likely to be profitable. Letters must be accompanied by the writer's name and address, not necessarily for publication, but as a guarantee of good faith.

Copies of this Paper, price 3d. each, or 3½d. post free, can be obtained from the Editor.

EDITORIAL.

In the present number our readers are much indebted to Mr. Buckle, not only for his interesting and lucid account of the Berlin Conference, but also for his translation of the late Director Wulff's paper entitled "What we wish for." We hope, and believe, that this instructive paper will be much appreciated by the managers of the various institutions.

In the next number a paper will appear entitled "The duty of Institutions in regard to past pupils," by Mr. H. W. P. Pine, Superintendent and Secretary of the Midland Institution for the Blind at Nottingham.

The Editor is pleased to state that the Committee of the Gardner's Trust have kindly acceded to his request that this paper should be continued during 1899, and therefore it will appear on the 20th of January, April, July and October of that year. The Editor hopes that he may count on the assistance of those interested in the Blind, and he will be glad to receive information about any recent improvements or alterations in any Institutions or Societies. It would be a great convenience if intending subscribers to this paper would kindly remit to the Editor, on or before December 15th, their subscriptions for the year 1899 in advance. The amount of subscription when paid *in advance*, for one copy of each of the four numbers, is 1/- *post free*.

HENRY J. WILSON.

NOTES.

1. We offer our congratulations to Mr. R. C. Swayne, who took 4th Class Honours in Theology at Oxford in July last. Mr. Swayne intends to take Holy Orders, and with that object in view is now undergoing a course of special instruction at Ely Theological College.

2. Mr. John Swinnerton and Mr. George T. M. Barker go up to Oxford this term. The former goes direct from the College for the blind sons of gentlemen, at Worcester; the latter left three years ago.

3. We have received no correction in our list of University Graduates that appeared last July. It is, therefore, presumably fairly accurate.

4. The Rev. H. J. R. Marston, incumbent of Belgrave Chapel, London, was special preacher at St. Paul's Cathedral on August 21st.

5. A simple plan for marking favourite passages in Braille books is the insertion of an ordinary paper fastener in the margin of a page. It has been tried with the most satisfactory results.

6. The paper of suggestions, referred to in the last number, for intending exhibitors at the Paris Exhibition of 1900, has not yet been issued, but will probably be ready in a few weeks. The delay has been unavoidable owing to the illness of one of the chief writers of the memorandum.

7. Mr. R. H. Rhys, J.P., one of the oldest magistrates in the county of Glamorgan, who has been fifty years blind, has been recently presented with a purse containing one thousand guineas, an antique silver salver, and an album with an address. In the address reference is made to Mr. Rhys's "long and eminent public services, extending over half a century," the fact of his having been chairman of the Aberdare Local Board of Health and District Council for 33 years, and of the School Board for

21 years, and of his having been a member of the Board of Guardians for 50 years.

8. We are pleased to announce that a workshop was opened on September 26th at Northampton, in connection with the Northampton and County Association for the General Welfare of the Blind. The Society was formed in 1896, when an appeal was made for £1000. At the end of last year the committee had in hand £1148, and after conferring on several occasions with Mr. Pine, secretary of the Nottingham Institution, who inspected a number of houses with a view to their suitability or otherwise, premises were secured in Newlands, near the Market Place. There are about 70 blind persons in Northampton.

9. At the Health Exhibition held this month in Birmingham, the judges, after severely testing the system in a practical way, awarded the Institution for the Blind at Edgbaston a Bronze Medal for the adaptation of the Braille system to "Phonetic Reporting for the Blind."

REPORT OF THE NINTH CONGRESS OF TEACHERS OF THE BLIND, HELD AT BERLIN, IN JULY, 1898.

(Kindly made by Mr. A. Buckle, at the Editor's special request.)

The Ninth Congress of Teachers of the Blind, 25 years after the first Congress in Vienna in 1873, as worthy of a Jubilee character, was held in a stately room in the fine new National Houses of Parliament. The preliminary meeting took place at seven p.m. on Monday, July 25th, at which the programme was finally settled, and the Officers of the Congress were appointed. Director Ferchen, of Kiel, was elected President, with Acting Director Matthies, of Steglitz, and Director Kull, of Berlin, as Vice-Presidents.

The formal opening took place on Tuesday, July 26th, at 10 a.m., when the President delivered an appropriate address, dwelling particularly on the sad loss of Director Wulff, of

Steglitz, who died so recently as Christmas last, and who, had his life been spared, would have so ably filled the post of President. Director Ferchen passed in review the progress of Blind Education since the Congress of 1873. Here he could point to splendid progress, and in one direction, viz., the care for the blind after leaving the school, he seemed pleased to lay special stress. His own efforts have been amongst the most successful in this respect, and therefore he could speak with authority.

Then followed addresses of welcome on one side, and addresses of thanks and congratulations on the other, which being ended, the real work of the Congress commenced by the reading of a paper on "the position of the Blind in the World," by the veteran Director, Herr Moldenhawer, of Copenhagen, who, after 40 years of earnest and successful work in Denmark, and having entered on his 70th year, may well be regarded as the Nestor of Blind Education. His paper was a popular delineation of the work to be done for the blind to fit him to take his place in society. Director Moldenhawer dwelt somewhat at length on the folly of attempting to educate the blind along with the seeing, shewing how imperfect such an education must be; and how in a well ordered Blind Institution only can be obtained that education and training which are best calculated to fit the blind man for the battle of life. Director Moldenhawer also laid stress upon the importance of pupils trained for music having another occupation to fall back upon, should success in music not afford sufficient for maintenance, or should success not come so soon as expected. The arguments of the paper were enforced and illustrated by real and practical instances, and it was marked by that practical good sense which characterizes all the utterances of Director Moldenhawer.

Director Scholte, of Breslau, introduced the question of "THE RIGHT OF THE BLIND TO WORK." Work, he well remarked, is that which most effectually helps the blind to forget the sadness of their lot. He pointed out that the earnest and diligent way in which the blind man pursued his occupation, whatever it might be, gave him the right to work, and further, that the law which forbade begging, either for the seeing or the

blind, makes good his right to work. He dwelt on the difficulties of interesting the public in the work of blind training, and advised the greatest care and patience in the training of really good workmen. In speaking of the work of societies, which have for their aim the fostering of pupils after they leave the Institution, he remarked that enquiry, and the offer of help, should for the Blind Institution be the very tell-tale of the balance of business life; when assistance falls behind enquiry, loss of work steps in. The programme of the Blind Institution ought to be the training of clever workmen, and the combating of over production, which is one of the evils under which the Sale-rooms of the Blind Institutions suffer.

THE VISIT TO THE STEGLITZ BLIND INSTITUTION was a combination of business and pleasure. The Institution is only a few miles out of Berlin, in a picturesque and healthy neighbourhood in the midst of fine forest trees, and surrounded by pretty villas of well-to-do Berliners. The members of the Congress were received in the Concert Hall of the Institution, and were entertained there by a performance of some pieces by a choir of 75 pupils, given with the usual spirit and feeling of a blind choir. Acting Director Matthies spoke a few words of welcome, deploring naturally the loss of Director Wulff, whose energy and experience had brought the Institution to its present eminent position. Then followed a stirring and eloquent address of welcome by Dr. Dryander, on behalf of the Consistorium of the Province of Brandenburg, concluding with wise and thoughtful words for the blind pupils present, suggested by some words in one of the pieces sung.

"Pursue it thro' the wide world round,
And Happiness will not be found."

He pointed out that although happiness would not be found when pursued only for its own sake, they could at least find contentment and peace of mind, which would give happiness enough.

Then followed the inspection of the Institution consisting of the School proper for 71 Boys and 32 Girls; a Preparatory School for 8 boys and 6 girls; a Blind Home for 35 Women; and a Blind Home for 23 men.

The gymnastic exercises of a class of the elder girls were gone through in first class style. The modelling class and a Braille Stereotyping Machine, an invention of Herr Hinze, one of the teachers, being worked by one of the female pupils evoked much interest. The splendid and extensive library of Braille Books won the admiration of all visitors. Indeed the whole Institution showed that it was worthy of its fame as a Model Institution for the whole of Prussia.

The preparatory school for the little ones from five to nine years of age with 15 boys and girls was of much interest to us. It is in a detached building where special care and teaching can be devoted to them to prepare them for the regular school. We could not but contrast the happier lot of these compared with some of the neglected ones, who come to us at eight or nine years of age, having spent their lives up to that age in sitting rocking in the corner.

THE BLIND HOMES were also interesting and instructive. They have Homes for blind young men as well as for women. They are of course in separate buildings but are arranged much on the same plan. Each inmate has a room for him or herself, in some cases two women join in one room. The Institution provides the necessary furniture in each room—bed, table, chest of drawers and chairs. There is a common day room, dining room and work rooms.

The work is provided for them and they are each paid what they earn, out of which they must pay for their food and clothing. Dinners are provided them at very small cost, and their breakfast and suppers they have at their own liking. On pages 59 and 60 will be seen what Director Wulff says on this subject.

The founding of homes for blind men is not regarded with general favour. Blind Women who have no friends to care for them undoubtedly need the protection of such homes. The danger which is apprehended by the friends of the blind is that the homes for the men may degenerate into mere asylums and become what one of the best friends of the blind described as "Hatching places of discontent."

It is considered best that men should be living with their seeing fellows and under the same conditions.

The best use to make of such homes would be to use them only for a transition stage between the school and complete independence.

The following day Director Entlicher, of Purkersdorf (Austria) introduced the subject of BLIND HOMES. He made use of the usual arguments—the difficulty the blind have in attaining positions of independence—the moral dangers of blind women, etc. The question was much discussed. Director Kull, of Berlin was opposed to the Homes altogether, and urged the opening of workshops for the blind. Director Heller, Vienna, pointed out two important matters in regard to this subject, viz.:

- (1.) Teachers and friends of the blind have the public to *educate* as well as the blind pupils.
- (2.) Care must be taken not to give the parents an opportunity of getting rid of the duty they owe to their blind children.

It was felt that although Director Heller's objections were not arguments against Blind Homes in all circumstances, yet they ought to be laid to heart by all the advocates of Blind Homes. No general resolution was come to on the question.

Then followed a most interesting account of the CARE OF THE BLIND IN RUSSIA, given by Director Naedler, of St. Petersburg. The Maria Alexandrovna Society had founded 23 Blind Schools containing 655 blind children. Including blind children under private instruction, there are in all about 900 children under instruction in Russia, and about 200,000 blind in the whole Country, of whom about 13 per cent. are born blind. The same society has founded three workshops for the blind in St. Petersburg, and one in Camenez Podolsk. It has also founded four Blind homes for those incapable of work. Twice a year a commission of oculists, ophthalmic surgeons, are sent through the country to deal with eye diseases—In the previous year 33 such commissions had dealt with 53,828 cases and performed 16,029 operations; 4733 cases had been deemed incurable—The Society (Mariënverein) annually expends at least 100,000 roubles (about £15,000) in the care for the blind. With the increase of expenditure, the Society rejoices in an increase of income. It

has the support of the highest in the land. The Emperor gives the Society an annual subscription of 25,000 roubles (£5,250) and has granted all the teachers and officers of the Society the civil service rights of pensions, and the letter packets of the blind are carried by the imperial post free of postage. The Dowager Empress has become protectoress of the Society, which, with confidence, looks to still further enlarging its operations.

In the afternoon of Thursday, the members of the Congress paid a visit to the BERLIN CITY BLIND INSTITUTION. This is really a Blind Day School; it is situated in ALTE JACOBSTRASSE in a large building which has been adapted for the purpose of the school, and also for the purpose of a workshop for adult blind. On the opposite side of the street is an orphan house, the inmates of which have the duty of bringing the blind children to school and taking them home again. In the school there are 37 boys and 23 girls in attendance, and in the workshops 50 blind men and 54 women working at basket making and brush making, and Director Kull informed the Congress that last year the sale of goods produced by these 164 amounted to £3,250. Director Kull is known as one of the most enthusiastic and energetic Directors of Germany, and so far as could be judged the institution is in a thorough state of efficiency in all its branches. It is well circumstanced for a day school for the blind in having the orphan institution in the same street to provide guides for the little ones, otherwise I fear its success would not be so eminent. Director Kull is an opponent of Homes for the Blind, and believes that well managed workshops will answer all the best purposes of the home. In a city like Berlin, and with a director like Herr Kull, one can well believe this to be the case.

On Thursday evening the members of the Congress were invited by the Burgomaster and the Authorities of Berlin, to a pleasant sail in a steamboat chartered for the purpose, to a picturesque neighbourhood on the Spree, called Rummelsburg; here was inspected a large Orphan Home for the city of Berlin. The arrangements of this home were admired by all the members. On the return journey the members were regaled on the steam-boat with a liberal cold collation.

On Thursday, Herr Kunz of Illzach, whose excellent maps are of so much use to all Blind Educators, read a paper on the question "Is it advisable to train the blind as Teachers of Music and Languages?"

He laid down the following three propositions:—

1. It is advisable that clever blind pupils should be employed as Music Teachers, as Teachers of Handicraft, and as Assistants in School work, in Blind Institutions.
2. It is advisable that Blind Institutions should continue to train well-endowed pupils for such work, without dispensing with their training in handicrafts.
3. The founding of a so-called High School for Music is unadvisable; on the contrary, it is advisable that some printing offices should undertake the printing of Braille Music, so as to enable the specially fitted and trustworthy blind to enter the conservatoires for the seeing.

The Congress adopted these sensible propositions of Herr Kunz, who further advised, that the training of the blind as Teachers of Language should not be attempted unless there was a prospect of the blind earning a livelihood by this means, and unless funds were forthcoming to secure a complete mastery of the language by residence in a foreign land; which, however, he thought might be accomplished at a moderate expense.

On the Friday a commission appointed at Munich to examine and report on the question of a special certificate for teachers in blind institutions, made their report, which on the whole was in favour of such certificates. The question was much discussed for and against; but ultimately the opponents of the measure, by a considerable majority, referred the matter back to the Committee.

The most interesting speech delivered before the Congress, and as generally agreed the most eloquent address, was given by Inspector Lembke, of Neukloster, who spoke of the "claims which the calling of a blind teacher made on him." The speaker dwelt on the mental and moral qualifications necessary in the cases of all who undertook the calling, in so earnest and impressive a manner as to merit the applause which he received; especially was it pleasing to see the feeling thrown into the subject, when

he dwelt on the home character, which should characterize the blind institution, and the mother-love which ought to pervade its atmosphere, and which the introduction of female teachers, seeing or blind, tended to promote. So entirely did all the members agree with Inspector Lembke's delightful and weighty address, that they decided no discussion should be held on it.

The Congress closed on Friday, July 29th. The sittings were well attended throughout, and although in actual resolutions much did not seem to have been done, yet so large a gathering of teachers and friends of the blind, to listen to the experience and opinions of their colleagues all so evidently interested in the same work, cannot but have valuable influence on the work. Indeed, were evidence needed of the value of such meetings, it is abundantly supplied in the progress of all matters connected with work amongst the blind in the past 25 years. The nineteenth century, now fast closing upon us, has indeed many wonderful things to relate, but the progress of no philanthropic cause has made more marked strides than has been made in what may be called the *First Century of Care for the Blind*.

THE FOLLOWING IS A TRANSLATION OF A PAPER ENTITLED
 “WHAT WE WISH FOR,”

BY THE LATE DIRECTOR WULFF, OF STEGLITZ, NEAR BERLIN.

*Read at the Eighth Congress of Blind Teachers held in Munich,
 August, 1895.*

The training of the blind stands to-day at the beginning of its second century of development on the same ground, out of which it has grown, and if it is to be blessed with a rich harvest, it must draw its fruit-bearing nourishment from the same soil. Its aim, too, is the same, only, what at one time was somewhat indefinite, now stands out sharp and clear.

What then do we desire for the blind? What are we striving after? Little, when we think of the sighted, for what we claim, is undoubtedly for each seeing person an acknowledged

right. But our *little* includes in itself for our blind *everything*. "The blind man must live; not to be maintained, but maintaining himself by the wages of his own labour, and he must as an adult, no longer have his life cramped and restrained by protection and guardianship, but, on the contrary, be allowed to form his life and character with the fullest freedom."

The first of these conditions supposes, that he has ability to compete with the sighted in his work, and the second supposes the existence of a character, which distinguishes between freedom and wilfulness, and which with firmness of will, in quiet untiring diligence, true to its convictions, gladly regulates its life in accordance with God's Word.

These conditions stand to one another in the closest reciprocal relation, and we, the educators of the blind, have a clear consciousness of the duties which these conditions lay upon us, in regard to the education and the training of the blind, and we should endeavour to pursue them during the period of their education with all earnestness.

The burning question then of our time, which lies heavy on the soul, and which we dare not allow to rest is, "What awaits our pupils after their completed period of education?"

Hundreds of the blind live to-day, and must continue to live, on alms, given not always with pitying, indeed not unfrequently with reluctant hands, which would fain be free from the burdensome beggar; and hundreds to-day pass a miserable existence in indigence, who certainly are not found in the street, but, in a not less degrading manner, must beg for pauper relief. Will then the aim "*not to be maintained, but to maintain themselves out of their own labour*," so inflexibly held up before our eyes everywhere, be attained in the near future, even in the case of the 2,600 or 2,700 pupils at present in German Blind Institutions? In the last report of the Society for promoting the independence of the blind in business at Steglitz, Berlin, I could show from the work-book, that in the Home for Blind Men and Blind Women, in connection with the Institution, which is open for the reception of former pupils, all the inmates with the exception of one female, earned by their work the total

cost for their lodging and maintenance. A ropemaker has sometimes brought his earnings up to 34/- a week, and some of the women to 18/- or 20/-, and even 22/- a week. During the past financial year the 26 inmates of the two homes made goods to the value of £2,500, and were paid as wages the sum of £734 18s., an average of £28 5s. for the year.

This result was reached under a continual struggle against a competition tending to lower wages; for example, reducing the price of a whisk from 2d. to 1½d. each; and *giving away* horse brushes for cavalry regiments for 1¼ each. Nevertheless, on the balancing of the account a surplus of £72 10s. remained as profit, after the wages were paid, which is to be reserved for the foundation of a sick benefit fund for the relief of the inmates of the homes.

I have attained this result because my efforts for work have been extraordinarily fortunate, and have found most favourable support in influential quarters. But in these successes (and it is on this account I have referred to them) lies irrefutable evidence, that the blind man by a thorough training in handicrafts can become so capable, that in spite of competition, he can earn a wage sufficient for his full maintenance, rendering him able to take his place in society by the side of the sighted workman, and be acknowledged as worthy of that position.

This last opinion I have expressed on a previous occasion, but in consequence of the peculiarly sad condition of so many of our blind people, it is still necessary, and will be necessary again, to give evidence of its truth. The aim "not to be maintained but to maintain themselves by the earnings of their own labour," attained in the case of a blind man, influences far beyond its merely economical side his happiness and character.

[The author then combats some of the charges of misconduct alleged against the blind as a class, and proceeds]

Misconduct in various forms, serious offences I have met with; who has not? But, honestly, among the faults of character, which are again and again laid to the charge of the blind, I do not find *ingratitude*. If I judge rightly, and I believe I do, then our whole thought and work must aim at overcoming in

the life of the blind those dangers, which intrude and threaten their character.

"Want teaches how to beg," says the proverb. Want compels begging, we may say with equal right. "My dear Sir," said an adult blind man once, "if you will believe me, I have fought against begging to the very last, but hunger is bad to bear; want, almost despair, has driven me to this course." What then remains for the blind man without means, and without occupation, except to claim the help of others?

I do not wait until I hear the reply, "the Poor-law authorities have the charge of providing for him, and do so provide." The blind man, however, in certain circumstances rightly prefers begging to the degrading forms and consequences of the Poor-law. So he stands in wet and cold, miserably clad, freezing with his barrel-organ in the street. Who dare cast a stone at him, when he seeks to warm himself with some spirituous liquor, and when habit thus leads him to drinking? Who dare in such circumstances speak of the blind man's inclination to drink?

Habit becomes second nature, is a proverb; and the habit to desire and to act in a certain way, says psychology, is the character of the man. Consequently he cannot act otherwise than he acts, and must act. Is it then to be wondered at, that he, who through the habit of years is compelled to wander as a beggar, cannot do otherwise, leading an irregular life, and thereby losing all sense of honour. It was therefore a natural consequence, when, as Klein relates, of 58 blind begging musicians in Vienna, only four accepted the offer to enter the asylum opened there; and that, when money was offered them not to beg any more, they took the money and begged in secret.

The blind man, shut out more than the sighted from the outer world, leads a more inwardly-directed life. All blind educators are agreed that the imagination is more active in them than in the sighted. Now, consider the blind man the greater part of the day self-centred, unemployed, giving way to his own thoughts; are not his thoughts in fresh youth and vigorous manhood likely to wander out of the way? How often, and rightly, is not the youth warned against loneliness? I consider we

ought to have the deepest pity for him, who in the fulness of his strength is condemned to a solitary and inactive life, and who suffers morally from it.

Every person who enters a Blind Institution is astonished at the productions of the blind. At home too the relatives and friends also express their wonder, and we have to check this, in order that the self-conceit of the pupils may not overstep reasonable bounds. The pupil with knowledge and ability leaves the Institution. He hopes for work, and by his work, to earn his livelihood. Work remains outside, and want makes its appearance, what is he to do? Some soon give up, others attribute their want of success to local circumstances, and think that a change of residence will bring work. I know a blind man in his fortieth year, a clever basket maker, who in such belief has changed his residence five times or more, with no other result except that of leaving debts behind him, and no thoughtless debts either. Others think a wrong choice of occupation is to blame. A few weeks ago I had a visit from a blind man, who seemed to be a good brush maker. As he found no work, he wished to be trained as a teacher. Although single individuals, here and there, in their need seeking help, bestir themselves and succeed, yet for many, very many, the final result is the same, they lapse into the centuries-old fate of the poor blind, into prolonging life by means of alms. What wonder if the blind man with this degradation, and with lacerated heart, is at enmity with the world and with men, that in spite of his ability to work, and his best efforts, he should sink lower and lower? We ought to understand that in course of time such a man loses the power of keeping a hopeful heart.

The charge of ingratitude in my opinion does not go for much. Even the work of the Blind Institution, which ought to be the means of laying the foundations of a happy life, may have only enabled him to see more clearly, and feel more keenly, his comfortless position, and so have become a source for deepening his wretchedness.

I do not exaggerate, nor paint a fancy picture. What I say is bitter, earnest truth. We see this, and we could still further

prove it : not blindness, but want of occupation, and of the very necessities of life, are the chief sources of danger to the character of the blind. And is it not so also for the sighted, sometimes even to a greater degree ? For among them too, want in certain circumstances produces criminals and murderers.

So far then our examination places in front of us ONE OF TWO ALTERNATIVES, EITHER—

1. We succeed in putting an end to the want of work for our former pupils ; and then we may expect thrifty self-dependence, joy in the consciousness of work and earning, contentment of spirit, and a free course for the development of a rich deep mental life ; OR—

2. We have want of employment ; no earnings, want, misery, laceration of spirit, and danger of ruin to the soul.

This double picture, my honoured colleagues, we all recognise ; but that is not enough. It is imperative upon us, that day by day we lay the matter to heart, so that it may be the impelling motive in the work of our daily calling.

And now I must follow up this double picture with a double question :—

1. What are the obstacles which render our aim so difficult to attain ; and,

2. What is to be done in order to reach our aim ?

Let me in the first place touch quite shortly on the hindrances which press on us, and on sighted workmen as well. The hindrances are : *competing contracts, and work done in prisons and work-colonies*. The contracts at the continually lowering prices, almost compel us to deliver rubbishy goods. At one time I used to send in competing tenders, but I have ceased to do so, for I have had scarcely any profit from them ; but it has happened, and this is important, that the firm which has secured the order which we failed to get, got the goods from us, of course at less price, and essentially inferior than we were able to offer under the terms of the competition. By the continuous lowering of prices by large firms, the wages of workmen have been reduced to such a degree that those who are employed in the home-industries of the Black Forest, &c., are obliged to

lead an existence of such a sort that one is very forcibly reminded of the much-talked-of misery of the Silesian weaver. The work done at such prices reduces other workmen to a miserable condition.

Two illustrations will shew the effect of the jail work, and of workmens' colonies :—

The chief of a Berlin firm, who is favourably disposed to our Institution, but who competes with it in a sort of ropework, said to me, “you cannot thrive against me. I have the work done in the jail, where I pay 5d. for a man's day's work ; on that your blind cannot live.”

Another example may be given. In a workman's colony in the neighbourhood of Berlin, the workman pays for lodging, food, and washing, 7d. a day. The effect on artisans generally, blind as well as seeing, is clearly the same.

And here comes to light the peculiar phenomenon that when, even with the best intentions and in good faith, pity is called upon to render vagabonds capable of earning a living, industrious struggling artisans are by the consequent lowering of wages rendered incapable of earning their living, and they are probably compelled to a *vagabond* life.

Hence we are clearly bidden to take our stand side by side with the artisan, or else by ourselves, to enter upon the contest for the protection of honest work.

With regard to the blind, it is said that he cannot, like the sighted, enter into active business concerns with his fellows ; he and his work are hidden. Hence the want of work. This is true, and is admitted, even when the paternal Institution, which watches over him, is using its utmost endeavour to find him purchasers.

But more difficult than this, yes, even greater than all other difficulties which meet us in our endeavour to place the blind man in a position of independence with regard to his occupation, is the general attitude of the sighted to the blind. From both high and low, at all times, I have met with most striking evidence of the warmest sympathy, and our age is specially rich in self-denying love for the blind. But the working of this sympathy

takes its direction through the idea the sighted have of the consequences of blindness, and this idea is a mistaken one.

Judging from the experience of their own lives, the sighted do not seem able to conceive of learning, good work, sound education, or useful activity in handicraft without the sight. This conviction has so grown up with their life and thought that they can hardly free themselves from it. Let me give you an example. A visitor comes into a Blind Institution, a child is given a book to read, accidentally the book is placed upside down, immediately a helping hand is stretched out to put it right, *the blind child alone* is not pleased with this help. The child reads, writes, and finds its place quickly on the map. The fineness of touch, and its assurance in finding its place are wondered at, and when the child departs, at once a hurried hand is reached out by the visitor to open the door. The evidence already given of the child's ability to find its whereabouts is forgotten; the feeling of absolute helplessness remains dominant in the mind of the visitor. To the warm feeling human heart, the blind is the most unfortunate of human beings who requires continual help, and who not only has to be supported, but also to be fed. One of my best Mecklingberg friends, who knew the working ability of the pupils of the Blind Institution there, and often praised it very highly, had constantly before his eyes as the most pressing need, *an Asylum for the care of the blind.* The poet of the "Palm Leaves," Gerok, who must have known the Blind Institution at Stuttgart, sent me once through a friend two poems for our blind people at Christmas. Deep love and heart-felt pity were evident in them. But when they were read to them, our blind children cried out, "the poet does not know us, sir, we are not so wretched."

I have on one or two occasions attended the Christmas Festivals of the Moon Society in Berlin, and found the speeches there were much in the same vein. Fourteen days ago I had a visitor from a large North German commercial town. The visitor said, "with us there is great generosity for the blind," but on the principle "*Give the blind sufficient to eat and drink, nothing further is done for them.*" We however must speak out of our

heart and say, "*Whoever procures me work for my blind folk, pleases me a hundredfold more than if he brought me gifts.*"

So much then for our friends. But what about the number of other people? I will not say that they are obtuse with regard to the blind. They think something in this way: "there is much misfortune in the world, and each has sufficient to do for himself; the blind must fit themselves to their own conditions, like other people; of course they can do no work, therefore they must beg, and we can afford to give them a trifle." A magistrate in a busy town in Niederlausitz had induced the town authorities to undertake the maintenance of two married blind men, a couple of brothers, for their training in a Blind Institution. The training time is ended, and the blind men have become clever rope-makers. From their interest in the technical work of the school there is £27 10s. in the Savings Bank for the purpose of procuring tools, hemp, &c. This is reported with a view of securing a place for a rope-walk and a small rope-house. The matter is brought before the town authorities; but, alas, the former warm impulse is fled, the old well-known idea of the helplessness of the blind rules the meeting. The blind able to maintain themselves as rope-makers? Impossible! The money spent on such a thing would be thrown away. The magistrate's proposal was declined. *One of the members proposed to purchase for them a barrel-organ.* That sounds hard in our ears; I do not however call it hard-hearted. He had the firm conviction that the men were not capable of earning a living as rope-makers, and the barrel-organ was their only salvation, and he gave expression to his conviction. I may remind you that at the Congress held in Berlin in 1879, our late colleague, Rosner, told us that one of the judges of a rope-makers' exhibition to which several Blind Institutions had contributed, had judged him (Rosner) among the Directors of Institutions as the only honest man. He had exhibited his rope-making with the remark, "Blind work finished with the help of a sighted master," which we others had designated as independent blind work. To this man it appeared more conceivable, that there should be liars among the Directors of the Institutions, than that there should be capable blind rope-makers.

How many examples could I produce where requests for work are declined for no other reason, than that the blind are not considered able to produce anything useful, and that for the same reason purchases are not made of, nor orders given to them. There are frequently known cases where work from the blind has been declined, and out of pity a copper has been slipped into the hand instead. *And they are treated as beggars going about under the appearance of seeking work!* Here then you have the hindrances.

And now for the other question. What is to be done in order to attain the aim we have in view? The conviction of the sighted with regard to the productive ability of the blind—the greatest hindrance in our way—is *not to be overcome by speech-making, however warm a tone may be adopted, nor by theoretical production of evidence, but solely and only by facts. What the blind can do, the sighted must see with their own eyes.*

This sort of contest for our blind folk, by which one place or town after another, and in which one inhabitant after another must be won over, is of course extremely troublesome, and will take years to accomplish, but it is the only course possible. Shall we grow tired in the fight? Shall we say the circumstances are more powerful than we are, so let us seek some other way? Shall we in the future train up our blind with a view to the acquisition of regular assistance along with their trade? There are blind, as there are sighted, as shewn by Workhouses, who are incapable of earning complete maintenance, and who therefore need some additional support. The percentage of these unfortunate ones among the blind is greater than among the sighted, not because they are blind, but because the cause of blindness is not infrequently the cause also of harm being done to other organs beside the eye. I need only instance epileptic fits. But the greater number of the blind possess the capacity of becoming independent by their own labour, and to prevent these becoming dependent on regular and continual help is the great aim and struggle of my whole life.

Support given renders the blind more dependent. It has a depressing influence on those continually receiving it, and it

gives to others an ascendancy over them which is palpable. The world speaks of a *pride of nobility*. Of that our blind folk know nothing. But there is a *pride of strength* and knowledge, and from this the blind have suffered humiliations without end. The consciousness of their own strength and knowledge must free them from it. "Poor fellow," says the ignorant labourer, in the *consciousness of his strength*, to the blind man playing in the dance, "there, have a drink." In this way his feeling of superiority exercises pity. An estimable man, whom I introduced into our office, with fine tact addressed as "Thou" a young woman of 22 years. I am convinced he would not so have addressed a sighted young woman in the same position. The blind girl *needing support* would have been rated even a degree lower. He who is continually supported never reaches the consciousness of real self-dependence. Hence it comes to pass, that the regular receiving, in the case of most men, produces the wish for receiving more, and when the giving fails, he becomes discontented, and if more is easily obtained, will not trouble himself about work. I believe, that in the recent founding of so many industrial homes we shall have to take this matter into consideration, so that these homes may not be like the old Asylums, may not develope into a simple supporting of the inmates. We should then only be finding means for a fraction of our blind people; and the fraction in the end would not be found to be happy. Thirty years ago we in the Blind Institutions would not hear of an Asylum. One of the most famous Directors at that time called them rightly "*hatching places of discontent*." I have the longing wish that our HOME ESTABLISHMENTS should be and remain WORK ESTABLISHMENTS for their inmates, supported by the wages earned by their labour, thus enabling them to attain the consciousness of self-dependence and independence. For them, because they, in honest resolution and strength of will, are a law unto themselves, we need no regulations or order for the household arrangements.

On the proposal of the President of the Society for Promoting the self-dependence of the Blind, I have drawn up some regulations for the Home at Steglitz which have been adopted.

My successor in office, however, will probably say "I do not understand Wulff, these are no "Home" arrangements, they are much rather agreements such as are made between landlords and tenants on the conclusion of a letting or contract."

To the real happiness of most men, to work for their daily bread, (I might say by the sweat of their brow) is necessary. The consciousness arising from such work, what thou art and hast, what the grace of GOD has let thee be and earn, gives the feeling of independence, freedom and joy of life. And to such heart and life-joy must our blind children arrive by our help. If we desire and are able, beside this, to give a present to them at Christmas or at any other time, well and good. Every father gives a present to his children, perhaps to his well-to-do ones, and we do this only in a paternal way. We gladden hearts and find grateful ones, but the receivers still remain capable of providing for themselves even without the present. The joy of my heart in quiet hours has often been this, and for it in such hours I have often thanked GOD, that thirty years ago, in the strength of my early manhood, with this aim steadily in view, I have not been compelled to leave it to others, but have firmly held to it, and in the pursuit of it, have been able to become ever more joyful and more confident, and now I know we need no longer be doubtful of its attainment. Incontestible evidences of it are numerous.

And now, after attempting to clearly state the case, what about the answer to the question, WHAT WE WISH FOR? Is not this the answer:—We wish in spite of all hindrances, however difficult, and at times apparently insurmountable, with firm heart to continue the contest, and in untiring fidelity ceaselessly to strive, that our blind folk shall experience the full blessing of work both for body and soul. Pitying love welled up in the heart of V. HAUY on the occasion of seeing sport made of the poor blind men in the streets of Paris for the purpose of vile gain, and impelled him to a course for their salvation, not through the expedient of alms, but through the awakening in them of their slumbering powers. Nothing but pure love it was which, twenty years later caused KLEIN, Director of the Poor Law, to take the

same course. When on the 13th October, 1806, the day before the unfortunate battle of Jena and Auerstadt, Zeune had opened the Steglitz Blind Institution in Berlin, and the invading enemy had carried off the treasure chest, and the money allowed by the King for their food, lodging, and clothing failed, then Zeune brought the remains of his paternal inheritance out of Saxony and offered it up, and so saved the new work thus grown into his heart. And in Dresden Fleming brought the same offering in the sad war times.

But enough of these proofs !

The training of the blind has grown out of the soil of warm, devoted, self-denying love, and now if it remains to-day on the same ground, if love to the blind like a fresh springing, unquenchable fountain shows itself living in our hearts, and instils strength into our calling, then our pledge will be redeemed.

So then, we are bidden PERSEVERE IN LOVE, AND TAKE ROOT DEEPER IN IT YEAR BY YEAR.

The Editor, "The Blind."

September 23, 1898.

Sir,

In the April Number of this Magazine, Mr. Stainsby had an important article on type-writing. In the *Leeds Mercury* for the 4th of May, I reviewed the Magazine, and, of course, paid particular attention to Mr. Stainsby's article, for as is well-known, I am a strong advocate for all the intelligent blind being made first-rate typists.

Now, although the proprietors of the *Leeds Mercury* have for a generation past treated all communications from the blind with the greatest consideration, it would have been absurd to expect them to give the names of different machines, and therefore I had to write in a more or less cryptic manner. A leading daily paper like the *Leeds Mercury* wants advertise-

ments, and if I had mentioned names I should have been making a present of something like £100 to the owners of the Williams' type-writing machine, for Mr. Stainsby is quite right in supposing that this is the machine which I strongly recommend the blind to use.

In the July number of *The Blind* Mr. Stainsby noticed my remarks in the *Mercury*, and in doing so quoted from them very fully.

Now the only important omission made in his extract from the *Mercury* is a passage which referred to Mr. Gladstone, who on being shown by Miss Gladstone a letter which had been written on this machine, asked how it was that the type was so beautifully clear, whereas most of the type-written letters which he received were either smudgy or faint. This is important. It is, however, only what dozens of my sighted correspondents have told me. When I used a ribbon machine, not unfrequently my correspondent would reply, "What is the matter with your typewriter? The letters are so faint that I could hardly read it." This, of course, was often news to me, and upon calling some sighted person to examine into the matter it was found that the ribbon had worked slack. Now as to the cost of the ribbon. I bought my ribbons from the same firm as Mr. Stainsby. I always paid for them 4/- each. It appears that lately this firm have reduced the price to 3/-. Now I think that it would only have been fair for Mr. Stainsby to mention this fact. However, it appears that for the future in 18 months the owner of a Williams machine will only save £2 10s. instead of £3 8s. Still this must be considered a very substantial saving. The saving of money, however, is as nothing compared to the saving of trouble. The best plan I think will be for me to relate my experience of the various kinds of Remington machine. Many years ago, a relative kindly gave me the one known as No. 5. I soon learned its use, and did some good work, but the ribbon was constantly playing me tricks, until at last I returned the machine with thanks to the good donor. Then I tried another machine with an entirely different name sold by the same Company. This was a much better instrument, but the ribbon was

very troublesome and very expensive. One day whilst hard at work a letter pierced the ribbon and stuck. No sighted person being at hand I tried to extricate the letter, and only succeeded in putting it out of order. It was the letter O, and having important work on hand, and not being able to spare the machine so long as was necessary to send it up to London for repairs, I substituted the hyphen for the damaged letter much to the amusement of my correspondents, one of whom, the Editor of the *Sunday Magazine* wrote, "I am in receipt of your oless contribution." About this time a blind correspondent at Ripon asked me what machine I used. He used the Williams, and praised it highly, especially for saving him all trouble and expense on account of ribbons. I may say in passing that this gentleman, although engaged in literary pursuits, and using his machine constantly, is working the same pads he had with the machine when new, now more than three years ago. Here, too, I may say that although I changed my pads at the end of 18 months, it was not at all necessary, for they were doing even at the end of that time much better work than the average performance of instruments worked with ribbons.

Mr. Stainsby thinks that I am not acquainted with Remington No. 7. I tested this machine for many weeks, and found it had all the faults which I describe. The only point in which it is superior to the Williams is one which Mr. Stainsby fails to point out. It has what I believe is called a satin touch. This is an admirable quality, and if the Williams could be supplied with it, that machine would then be perfect. Mr. Stainsby says the paper feed never fails. The agent of the machine who called on me was an expert, but he will not confirm Mr. Stainsby. I pointed out to him that one reason which induced me to prefer the Williams was the infallibility of the feed, whilst the paper was always missing the clips on the Remington No. 7. I asked him to fix the paper for me, and three times in succession when I turned the cylinder the paper missed the clips. Every operator whom I have consulted makes the same complaint. Then again Mr. Stainsby says that because an operator's hand is on the lever when he moves the carriage back, therefore he does

not forget to space. I can only say I did, and whenever I did, I destroyed two lines of my work. Here, too, I may point out another very important peculiarity of the Williams machine. The work is in sight. That is, it is in sight of those who can see. If I am interrupted, and want to know my last letter, word or sentence, any sighted person at hand can tell me with a glance. Now with ribbon machines the carriage has to be raised, and a sighted person has to peer under, and if the weather is dull it is difficult to get the desired information. I am only pretending to speak for the blind, but it is obvious that this quality is most important to the sighted operator, for he sees immediately he makes a mistake, and has merely to move the carriage back and correct the peccant letter.

It will be noted that Mr. Stainsby gives the whole case as to the merits of ribbons versus ink-pads away in the following sentence :—

“ With regard to the machine being used whilst the ribbon is not running, I have found that blind typists instantly detect by the sound of the writing whether the ribbon is working properly or not.”

Clearly then the ribbon does get wrong with his blind typists as with me. Now why on earth should they be bound as it were to keep one ear on their ribbon and the other on their work, when they can have a ribbonless machine? For my part, I would not accept a ribbon machine if I were bound to use it.

If I dealt with Mr. Stainsby's remarks about portability I should be more emphatic than before, so I will pass over his remarks on that head.

Now as to durability. It requires no knowledge of mechanics to know that the Williams is part for part a stronger machine than the Remington. The key levers and driving arms are made of stamped steel, with a very large bearing which reduces wear to a minimum. The Remington key levers are still made of thin pine, whilst the connecting wires are about only 16 gauge steel wire. When I add that the Williams' went to Chitral with our troops, that one was lost on the P. & O. boat “ China,” one went through the Turco-Greek war, and one was

on board the "Raleigh" at the bombardment of Manilla, and that another is being used by General Miles now campaigning in Porto Rico, that another figures in a recent number of the *St. James' Budget* in an illustration at the front with the United States troops, and that another was wrecked at Earl's Court in the explosion which recently occurred there, it will be seen that this unknown and fragile machine has been in some hot corners. The Williams is seven years old, and has had an office in London for the last six years which has disposed of no less than 10,000 machines. This record has only been attained by one or two other machines. What can I say more? I could say much, but so far as the Williams is concerned I will merely add one sentence, and after all it is experience which does it. I have now had this machine for more than two years. It has never been out of order in the slightest manner. Except 4/- for new ink-pads which were not wanted, it has not cost me a farthing during the whole of that time. On an average I have worked it many hours every day. I think all unprejudiced typists who have followed me so far will agree that I have proved what I set out to prove, viz: that this machine upon which I am now writing is very superior to the Remington, especially for the blind. I have left myself very little space for the Hammond, but if, as Mr. Stainsby implies, the Remington is superior to the Hammond, and if, as I contend, the Williams is superior to the Remington, then *a fortiori*, the Williams is a very superior machine to the Hammond. I, however, prefer this wonderful machine to the Remington. To a master in one of our public schools it would be invaluable, for one of its features or qualities is, that the style can be changed instantly to any one of the 24 different styles, including the Greek and Gothic characters, so that a paper could be set in either German or Greek with the utmost facility. Dr. Campbell likes the action of the Hammond, but I do not. The mechanical stroke is a disadvantage, for the operator never seems to get into sympathy with his machine. It is something like tasteless food to a man blessed with a fine palate, or a scentless flower to a nose endowed with a keen sense of smell. Mr. Stainsby asks how it is Dr. Campbell has 70 of this class of

instruments at work if the Williams is a better machine? He had better ask the doctor direct. He will find that it certainly is not because the Hammond is a better machine than the Williams. But does not Mr. Stainsby see that if this argument were sound it would also dispose of the Remington, which he prefers to the Hammond? I do not know what may have influenced Dr. Campbell, but a saving of say £5 a machine on the first cost of 70 machines, means a total saving of £350, which is a good round sum. Now, this tedious tale must here have ending. My object is simply to make known to my fellows in affliction what a treasure I have. I may add that I always recommend my blind friends when they have a good useful ribbon machine to be content with it, and not to go to the expense of a Williams. But when they are purchasing one for the first time I strongly recommend this. I know of two public companies using more than 100, each of them.

Yours faithfully,

ALFRED HIRST.

Ruswarp, near Whitby.

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